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element truly as common as air, for it forms one two-hundredths of the atmosphere.

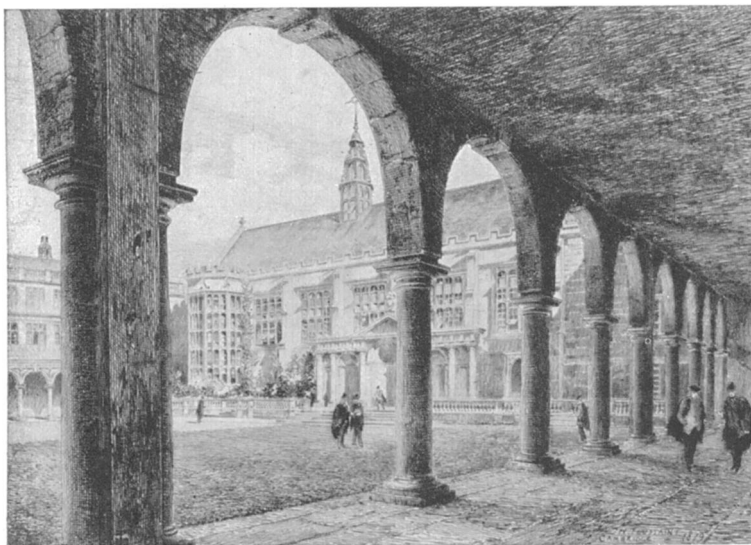
Rayleigh was for eighteen years professor of natural philosophy at the Royal Institution; he was for eleven years secretary and for five years president of the Royal Society; he was president of the British Association when it visited Montreal in 1884; he was chancellor of the University of Cambridge until his death; he received a Nobel Prize and all the honors that go to men of science. During the war and when over eighty he rendered great service to the progress of aviation as chairman of the National Committee on Aeronautics. With unusual truthfulness it can be said "we shall not look upon his like again," for the scientific and social conditions of his life will not recur.

REFORM OF THE ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES

FROM the days of Newton to Kelvin, Stokes, Maxwell, Rayleigh, Thomson, Rutherford and Larmor, the University of Cambridge has

been the home of mathematical physics. Newton entered Trinity College in 1666, and was elected a fellow in 1667. During the subsequent two hundred years until Rayleigh was elected to a fellowship in 1866, the college, which was especially frequented by the sons of the nobility and of the upper classes, produced a long line of men of distinction, including many mathematicians. Sir J. J. Thomson, second wrangler in 1880, was elected to a fellowship in that year and is now master of the college.

Oxford and Cambridge, which with about one tenth of the number of the students claimed by Columbia, have been responsible for the education of more than one half the leaders of England, and England has had more great men than any other nation. It is a noteworthy circumstance that these universities, medieval not only in religion but also in their whole outlook on life, should have this record. It seems necessary to assume that the able men of a great race were drawn to Oxford and Cambridge rather than that an



NEVILLE COURT, TRINITY COLLEGE.

obsolescent system of education was responsible for their performance.

Oxford and Cambridge have already been reformed by act of parliament, and it is now proposed to repeat the performance with the labor party as the power behind the British throne, rather than men such as Larmor, the mathematical physicist, who represents Cambridge in the conservative interest in parliament. The announcement of the plans of the government were made by Mr. Fisher, a former university professor, now minister for education, to a deputation from the educational committee of the Parliamentary Labor Party, which urged the desirability of an inquiry into every aspect of the two universities. Mr. Fisher informed the deputation that the authorities of both universities had agreed to the principle of the inquiry. He gave an undertaking that the government would carefully consider the question of the representation of the labor movement and of women on the commissions.

The labor members, in presenting their demands, suggested that the scope of the inquiry should be so wide as to include the finance of the two universities, their endowments, constitution and government, and their relation to other parts of the national system of education, including the education of women. The deputation reminded Mr. Fisher that since the last public inquiry into the two universities the educational system had been revolutionized. Further, the number of students who could profit by study at Oxford and Cambridge had largely increased. The deputation declared that the labor movement desired that every man and woman capable of pursuing an education at the two universities to good account should be able to obtain it. They suggested that the end of the war was a specially suitable time for the inquiry which they

sought, and declared that the financial arrangements of Oxford and Cambridge offered *prima facie* some ground for believing that considerable economies would be made possible by a better system of administration—for example, by the greater centralization of the revenues now received by the colleges.

A demand was made for a thorough overhauling of the administration of the colleges with a view to diminishing the cost of living in college, which they estimated to be rarely less, and generally considerably more, than £100 for six or seven months' residence and education. That, it was contended, excluded the sons of men of small means, unless they were assisted by scholarships or exhibitions. The deputation definitely asserted that no systematic effort had been made by all college authorities to reduce the cost of residence and education to the lowest point compatible with efficiency. It was added that working people did not accuse college authorities of any deliberate policy of exclusiveness.

The deputation also asked for the thorough overhauling of the present system of awarding scholarships and exhibitions. It was stated that working people thought it highly improper that a money prize for a term of years should be awarded to a man who did not require it when so many men were debarred by financial difficulties from receiving a university education. Their view was that scholarships should be used to assist men who without assistance would be unable to meet the cost of an Oxford or Cambridge education.

Among other recommendations the deputation proposed that the constitution and government of the two universities should be reformed in such a way as to create a central body in each which would have effective control over the whole of the revenues and would compel the col-

leges to submit to its requirements—for example, in reducing the cost of living and in appointing lecturers and fellows. They also pressed for the inclusion on the governing body of each university of the representatives of the outside public, nominated by the Board of Education or otherwise, and for the abolition of the power of convocations to veto university legislation. Other points to which the labor deputation attached importance were the granting of degrees to women and the development of extra-mural university education.

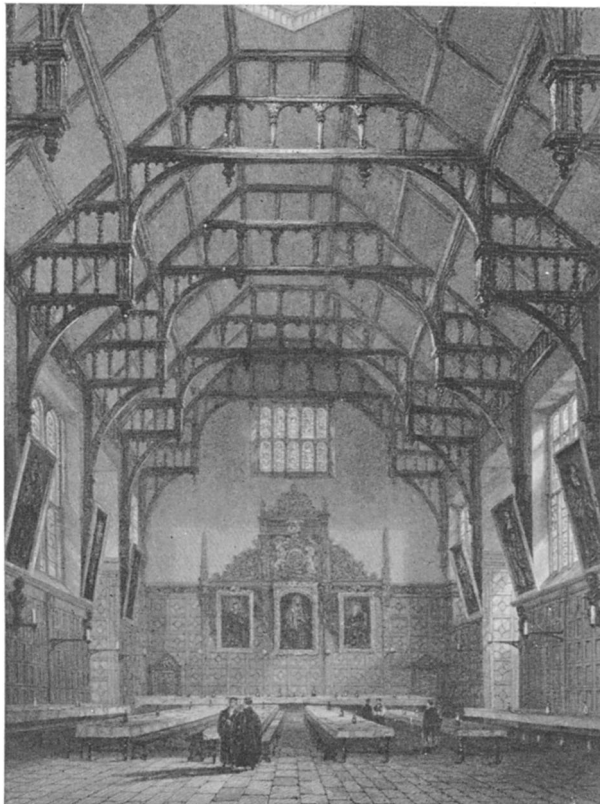
Finally, the deputation assured Mr. Fisher that labor was strongly in favor of a far larger public expenditure upon universities as upon

all other kinds of education. But they contended that, until Oxford and Cambridge were reformed, they could not properly be assisted by the grant of public money.

SCIENTIFIC ITEMS

WE record with regret the death of Gustaf Retzius, the eminent Swedish anatomist and anthropologist. Professor Retzius's father and grandfather were also distinguished Swedish professors of natural history and anatomy.

DR. THEODORE W. RICHARDS, professor of chemistry at Harvard University, has been elected president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Professor Alexander



THE HALL OF TRINITY COLLEGE.